



WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. of L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

HEADQUARTERS

801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.

FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY

SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

PROGRESS OF McNAMARA TRIAL

Large Number of Talesmen Being Examined and Nine Have Been Temporarily Passed.

Los Angeles, Nov. 4.—There have been nine talesmen passed by the prosecution and defense in the McNamara case. This does not signify, however, that the nine that have been passed will be finally accepted as Jurymen. The prosecution has ten, and the defense twenty, peremptory challenges, being thirty in all. It appears quite likely at this time that the defense will use at least three or four in excluding that number from the nine already passed. Information has just come from Indianapolis that the Federal Grand Jury has been granted permission by Judge Markey, of the Criminal Court, to take possession of the account books of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, and other evidence which has been sought by the prosecution. Judge Markey also granted the petition of the States Attorney of Los Angeles County for permission to photograph dynamite, nitroglycerin and exploding apparatus alleged to be included in the evidence. He, however, deferred decision as to whether or not pages of the books of the Iron Workers' Association also might be photographed. It is not considered that this alleged evidence will prove or disprove anything, being merely what might be termed a "grand stand play" of the prosecution to attract and maintain public interest to their side.

DO YOUR PART

Washington, Nov. 4.—The Union Label Trades Department is just issuing a circular letter which is being forwarded to all local unions throughout the United States, on the subject of contract prison labor. The Bocher bill, which deals with this subject, is in a most advantageous position in the House Committee of Labor, of which the Hon. W. B. Wilson, ex-secretary-treasurer of the Miners, is chairman, and includes among its members Congressman Buchanan of Illinois, an iron worker, and Congressman Maher, of New York, a hatter. This bill will undoubtedly be reported favorably almost immediately after the convening of the coming session of Congress and the letter that is being issued by the Label Trades Department is requesting all local unions to appoint committees to wait on their representatives in Congress while they are at home and urge them to vote for the adoption of this measure.

"CONFUSION RAMPANT"

Toledo Union Leader Publishes Editorial Conspicuous for Its Trenchant Trade Union Philosophy.

Washington, Nov. 4.--Under the caption, "Confusion Rampant," there appeared in a recent issue of the Toledo Union Leader, a splendidly written editorial, worthy the perusal of every union man or woman. Its criticism of the "isms" nostrum peddler is keen and well grounded, and the writer displays a grasp of the economic forces in possession of the men of labor which is entirely ignored by the political faddists. Trade unionists capable of differentiation of the character manifest in the treatment of the subject discussed are performing a service incalculable to our labor movement. The following excerpts are worthy of the highest consideration:

"In these days of wondrous changes and clashing opinions, workers stand bewildered at the countless 'isms,' short cuts and nostrums handed them by men who advocate every possible remedy but one--help yourself. # # # The most abstract philosophy is dished up to the workers. The future is painted in the most dazzling and lurid colors, and include the most minute details, but they are not told that the struggle for better conditions must be waged in the shop, and that if workers are incapable of dictating how their labor power--their life--shall be sold, they will cut a sorry figure when they are engulfed in the meshes of politics. The boss sees this point, and he never objects to the ravings of the revolutionary politician in his shop. In fact, the working class politician plays the bosses' game by telling the men that politics will cure their ills, instead of securing power just as the boss did--through economic methods. The boss don't care who runs the government if he is allowed to dictate conditions in his shop. The boss also notes that any worker who gets the political bug loses his activity in the trade union movement. This fact is glossed over by working class politicians, who dazzle and confuse non-thinkers by their high-sounding phrases and parrot-like utterances. # # # Their frothy declamation provides an easy living from easily swayed workers, who fail to notice the absence of their 'friends' when they wrest better conditions from their employers. # # # We don't know how long the present hysteria will last, but we will continue to resist the political heresy in unions that is deadening our activities and making blind and prejudiced intolérants out of some of our best men. # # # The theory that politics--the state--the government--will solve the question is only to say that workers can turn their troubles over to others, who are placed there by men incompetent to even regulate their hours, wages or conditions. Build up your unions--acquire industrial power, just as did the capitalist. Your political power will follow naturally, just as did the capitalists'. Stop playing the capitalists' game by listening to confusion rampant of ballot-box worshipers, whose organized fanaticism make an easy living possible, as they sneer at your unions--the only force an employer fears, for it alone continually forces him to give up a greater share of the wealth you create."

LONGSHOREMEN ON STRIKE

Sydney, Australia, Nov. 4.--Four thousand longshoremen are on strike for an increase in wages from 30 to 36¢ an hour. Steamers plying between the colonies are seriously affected and shippers refuse to accept cargoes bound for Sydney.

RAILWAY MEN WIN STRIKE

Schenectady, N. Y., Nov. 4.—Just 43 hours from the time the first car was ordered to the barn and the street car strike inaugurated here service was again resumed. The contest occurred because the men on the system had organized a union. The management upon learning the names of some of the members, discharged them, and the balance of the men ceased work until such time as the men discharged were reinstated. Nearly all of the employees were members of the new organization, and those who were not came out with those who were members. When the settlement was reached the Company agreed to interpose no objection to its employees joining the union; also agreeing to the reinstatement of all employees who went on strike, and also those whose suspension led up to and caused the strike. The Company will reinstate all employees who left its service in connection with the strike, and it is further agreed that the Company will meet with a committee of the union to take up for consideration and discuss with the end in view of entering into an agreement covering all working conditions. This agreement was eminently satisfactory and all of the men have returned to work.

BOILER MAKERS' STRIKE

Schenectady, N. Y., Nov. 4.—Boiler Makers and Helpers to the number of 1,000, employed in the boiler and tank shops of the American Locomotive plant in this city have walked out. The difficulty is caused on account of the American Locomotive Company attempting to do repair work for the New York Central, on which road a strike has been in force since last February.

A GREAT DEMONSTRATION

Seattle, Nov. 4.—One of the largest demonstrations ever held in this city occurred recently on the occasion of the mammoth McNamara protest meeting. The audience crowded Dreamland Pavilion, one of the largest structures in the city, preceded by a huge parade with over 10,000 men in line. The parade was conspicuous by the fact that there was displayed one of the largest banners ever constructed, being over 30 feet long and 15 feet high, supported by some 20 men, on which was inscribed "We Believe in the Innocence of the McNamaras." Officials of the State Federation and other organizations of the State and city delivered appropriate addresses.

USE PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Cleveland, Nov. 4.—Organized labor has won its contention to obtain for all citizens the use of public school buildings. The school board has passed an amendment to the board rules opening the schools to the public. The only class of meetings barred are direct appeals for votes and sectarian religious meetings, and all meetings must be concluded by 10 p. m. Fifteen signatures of tax payers on a petition to the School Director are necessary to procure the use of the buildings. Labor was the first to take advantage of the new order of things. The Cleveland Federation has started a ten-day campaign to place the initiative and referendum in the state constitution.

FEDERAL COMMISSION MEETING

Washington, Nov. 4.—The Employers' Liability and Workmen's Compensation Commission, which was created under a joint resolution of Congress to make a thorough investigation into the subject of employers' liability and workmen's compensation, was ordered to transmit a report by the first day of January, 1912, and recommend to Congress such legislation as seems desirable. This Commission has held numerous public hearings and has practically arrived at an agreement on the recommendations to be submitted. It has just announced, however, that it will hold another public hearing on November 6, at 10:30 a. m. in Room 210, the United States Senate Office Building, in Washington. It is stated that in the call for this public hearing the character and extent of the administrative features of the law have been left open for a future determination and suggestions are invited with reference thereto, as well as suggestions respecting the details of the law under the plan heretofore outlined.

COMPULSORY INSURANCE IN GERMANY

Berlin, Nov. 4.—The reichstag has read for the first time and sent to a special committee the new bill providing for the compulsory insurance of employees. The purpose of the bill is to extend—without state aid—the advantages of compulsory insurance against invalidity and old age to practically all categories of employed persons who are not subject to the provisions of the workmen's insurance scheme, and whose incomes do not exceed \$1,000 a year. It is calculated that the new law will affect over 2,000,000 employees. The contributions of employers and employed will be equal, and, according to the government bill, are graduated up to a maximum joint contribution of 8 per cent of the insured income. It is quite probable that the details of the bill will undergo considerable alterations in committee, but there seems to be a general unanimity as to the general provisions, and it is predicted that it will receive the sanction of the legislative body during the present session.

TWO HUNDRED MACHINISTS STRIKE

Toledo, Nov. 4.—A strike of 200 machinists employed by the Kent Machine Company and Owens Bottling Company occurred recently. The difficulty occurred over a verbal agreement with the companies in reference to the erection of work, as well as a dispute with regard to wages and apprentices. The Machinists have contended that an apprentice should be permitted during his apprenticeship to be employed in the various departments in order that he may be turned out a skilled craftsman at the end of his apprenticeship. The outlook for victory is bright.

STRIKE SETTLED

Winnipeg, Nov. 4.—It is reported that the coal strike which has been in effect in Alberta and British Columbia during the past eight months has been settled, the men having gained a 10 per cent increase. The new minister of the Interior is being given credit for effecting the settlement.

LABOR WINS FIRST ROUND

Columbus, O.--The Women's 9-hour law, in order that it might be tested as to its constitutionality, has been taken to the courts. On a presentation of the case Labor won the first round, when Judge Dillon of this city decided that the law was constitutional. It is expected that the decision will be appealed from, but it is also confidently expected that the higher courts will affirm the decision just rendered. The Attorney-General of the State, at the request of the Ohio manufacturers, has decided also to start a friendly suit to test the constitutionality of the new Compensation Law. It is stated that the manufacturers desire to know positively whether the law will be upheld by the courts before they contribute to the state fund provided under the law.

WAGE INCREASES ON RAILWAYS

Washington, Nov. 4.--Railway systems, with a mileage aggregating 47,500, have increased the wages of employees during the past year 4.87 per cent over 1910. It must be borne in mind, however, that a considerable proportion of the increase included in the per cent given will not apply until 1912. The different classes of employees received the following percentage of increase over the wages of 1910: Trainmen, 6.46 per cent; shopmen, 5.58 per cent; telegraph operators and dispatchers, 4.88 per cent; station men, 3.16 per cent, and trackmen, 2.18 per cent. The total amount of this increase means that there will have been put into the pockets of the employees at the close of 1911 the sum of \$14,636,000 more than was received for the same service in 1910. This magnificent result is due solely to the effective organizations of labor being maintained and strengthened each year by the employees of the great transportation lines of the country.

AUSTRIAN RAILWAY STRIKE FEARED

Vienna, Nov. 4.--Owing to the fact that the Austrian State Railways, through the Minister of Railways, refuses to recognize the railway men's organization, or negotiate with its officers, the feeling has become acute and there is great danger of a general strike. The various organizations on these railways have formed a coalition similar to the American System Federation and attempted to present their grievances to the Minister of Railways. The Minister declined to see the deputation on the ground that a member of the reichsrath, who was not a railway employee, but an official of a trade union, accompanied it as spokesman, and declared that he could only negotiate with the state railway employees direct. The situation is extremely critical.

PUBLICITY OF RIGHT SORT

Atlanta, Ga., Nov. 4.--The Atlanta Georgian and News is printing a series of articles relative to the American Federation of Labor, owing, probably, to the fact that Labor's great convention will convene in that city on Monday, Nov. 13. These articles are of a news and historical character and cling closely to fact.

FAR REACHING RULING

United States Supreme Court Upholds the Federal Safety Appliance Law
By An Unanimous Decision.

Washington, Nov. 4.--Complete control of all the railroads of the country by the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the practical elimination of State Commissions from any authority is foreshadowed in the opinion which has just been handed down by the United States Supreme Court. The Court held that hereafter all locomotives, cars, or other equipment used on any railroad which is a highway of interstate commerce must comply with the Federal Safety Appliance Act. In its opinion the Court laid down the rule that compliance with the Federal law is compulsory on all railroads which are engaged in the transportation of persons or freight from one State to another. In minutely elaborating this position it is held that the cars or equipment of such roads, even if engaged in such transportation within the confines of a State, must be considered as part and parcel of the road, and therefore completely under the jurisdiction of the Federal Commission. The members of the Interstate Commerce Commission have been embarrassed on numerous occasions by clashes of authority with State Commissions, and as a consequence they are gratified at the ruling of the Court, which was unanimous.

THE FESTIVE STRIKE-BREAKER

Washington, Nov. 4.--During the progress of the garment workers' strike in Cleveland, Ohio, a squad of professional strike breakers were employed to make believe that they were at work as garment workers, in order, of course, to discourage the strikers. Later on, this same squad was taken to El Paso, Texas, and employed as machinists and boiler-makers. This is the usual routine of the life of a strike breaker, and is a phase of the strike which is extremely ludicrous. As a matter of fact, it very seldom occurs that in a strike of any magnitude it is possible for the employers of labor to recruit any considerable number of competent mechanics to take the places of union members who have ceased work for the purpose of enforcing their just demands.

MITCHELL DAY OBSERVANCE

Pittston, Pa., Nov. 4.--President John P. White of the United Mine Workers delivered the principal address here on Monday afternoon, Oct. 30, the occasion being the annual observance of Mitchell day, which falls on Oct. 29 each year, but as it occurred this year on Sunday, the exercises were arranged for the day following. All the collieries in this section were closed in honor of the day, and an immense crowd attended the ceremonies, which were held in the state armory. After the speaking an impromptu reception was held in honor of the national president, as this was his first visit to this section. After the reception President White departed for Carbondale, where he delivered an address in the evening.

Detective Richard Crispin of Regina, Sask., connected with the Thiel detective agency, has just been sentenced to seven years in the penitentiary for fabrication of evidence and perjury.

PRISON LABOR NEWS

Washington, Nov. 4.—The Reliance-Sterling Manufacturing Co., commonly known as the prison labor trust, does not seem to be satisfied with its fourteen prison contracts, extending from Rhode Island to South Dakota, and is reaching out for more. It has submitted to the Prison Commission of Kentucky a bid for the labor of 250 convicts at the state penitentiary at Frankfort. Its offer was 67½¢ a day per man, the state to furnish shop room, heat, light and power. Another bidder was the Hoge-Montgomery Co., which has manufactured shoes with prison labor in Kentucky for the past 18 years. The controlling stock holder of the Reliance-Sterling Mfg. Co. is Milton F. Goodman, Secretary of the Associated Jewish Charities. Another director is Judge Ward H. Watson, of the Appellate Court of Indiana. Fred H. Mills, sales agent of the New York Prison Department and treasurer of the American Prison Association, is a director in one of the subsidiary companies of the trust, the Hawkins Shirt Co., which operates the contract at the Baltimore city jail.

CONSUMERS' LEAGUE FORMED

Washington, Nov. 4.—A branch of the National Consumers' League has been formed in this city. "Sympathetic Imagination" was made the slogan of the members of the new league. "Sympathetic Imagination" was interpreted as having consideration for working people, and the members of the new branch agreed to keep it constantly before them. It is intended after the league has been perfected, to institute what is known as the "white list". This list is to contain the names of the business firms who are known to be considerate to their employes and the league members will be urged to patronize the "white list" firms.

AN UNIQUE PUBLICATION

Washington, Nov. 4.—There has just been received at headquarters a copy of a book containing the labor legislation enacted by the 47th General Assembly of the State of Illinois, issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Aside from containing a transcript of all the laws passed by the recent Assembly, it also carries in its index a brief abstract of all the labor laws of the state, arranged in chronological order, and giving the nature of the enactment. The compiler of this work, David Ross, is entitled to great praise and other labor bureaus might follow the manner of compilation with profit.

UNREST IN NEW ZEALAND

Washington, Nov. 4.—Compulsory arbitration in New Zealand is rapidly becoming unpopular, and practically all of the labor unions have lost confidence in the arbitration court, while several of the more important trade unions have cancelled their registration under the act. The seamen, unable to secure redress, ceased work, and there are now thirty vessels engaged in the coast trade that are idle for want of crews. If these demands are not met by the vessel owners it is expected that the difficulty will involve a still larger number shortly.

OPEN-AIR SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

London, Nov. 4.—The first open-air school in Birmingham was opened in September. The children were carefully selected by the medical inspector of the Birmingham Education Committee from the elementary schools of the city, and the children are from confinement, or perhaps heredity, too weak to derive any real educational advantage from attendance at the ordinary elementary schools of the city. No expense has been spared to produce the nearest approach to perfection in this school. The buildings have been substantially constructed and are open on three sides and are provided with folding glass shutters in order to furnish protection should it be needed in unusually severe weather. It is the intention, however, to give all instruction in the open air when possible, and to use the glass rooms only in inclement weather.

NEW YORK COMMISSION HEARINGS

New York, Nov. 4.—The commission empowered by the State Legislature to investigate the conditions under which manufacturing is carried on in cities of the first and second class in the State of New York, of which President Gompers is a member, held its first session on October 10 in New York City. The hearings in this city have been concluded and adjournment taken to Albany, where the commission reconvened on October 28. A great mass of testimony was taken in New York City relative to factory conditions, showing the great need of remedial legislation. The Fifth Avenue Association, a civic organization of this city, is assisting in the work of bringing material facts before the commission, and is appealing to the public spirit of the community generally for information to aid in the work.

WEAVERS FAVORED IN RULING

Fall River, Nov. 4.—Attorney General James M. Swift has rendered an opinion that the system of grading practice in many of the textile mills of Massachusetts is in reality but another form of fining and that as such it is prohibited by Chapter 584 of the Acts of the present year. This decision is far reaching and it is of great importance to every weaver in the state, as it will stand until such time as it is overruled by the Supreme Court, which is not likely. It is of further importance in the fact that the decision puts on the manufacturers the burden of proof. The weavers are highly elated over the ruling.

A COMMENTABLE OBJECT

New York, Nov. 4.—The Social Service Commission of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has inaugurated a nationwide campaign for one-day-in-seven for all industrial workers. It is stated that the first effective measure of this kind to be passed by any State legislature was adopted in Connecticut at the last session, and the bill was introduced by Reverend Charles S. Macfarland, the Secretary of the Federal Council Commission. The Commission asserts that an effort will be made to adopt a uniform law of this character in all of the States.

CANADIAN MAIL CARRIERS STRIKE

Regina, Sask. Nov. 4.—The clerks and mail carriers of this city are on strike, although these men are attached to no organization of labor, or otherwise. The strike came as a result of oppressive conditions. The men are overworked, each man doing the work of at least two, and wages are extremely low, opportunities for advancement having been carefully eliminated by the officials. It is reported that there is an unrest almost reaching rebellion among all the Canadian postoffice employees.

CRITICAL RAILROAD SITUATION

Chicago, Nov. 4.—It is stated that the shop employes on the Rock Island Railroad are voting overwhelmingly in favor of the strike. The point at issue is an increase in wages. The management of the Rock Island has recognized the System Federation and has granted working rules that are satisfactory to all the unions, but has refused to grant any advance in wages, the demand being for a 10 per cent increase.

EQUAL PAY BILL SIGNED

Albany, N. Y., Nov. 4.—The New York City School Teachers Equal Pay Bill has been signed by Governor Dix. This bill was enacted, backed by the labor organizations, and provides that in the schedules of salaries hereafter adopted there shall exist no discrimination by reason of sex. This bill sets a good example and it is trusted that other states may emulate the action taken by the State of New York.

SHOVEL WORKERS WIN STRIKE

Charleroi, Pa., Nov. 4.—An amicable adjustment has been reached in the trouble at the Hussy-Binns Shovel plant, which resulted in the factory being almost entirely closed down for a few days. The trouble has been adjusted by T. E. Flynn, General Organizer for the American Federation of Labor, J. P. McGinley and John Ferry, and the men have returned to work.

ENGINEERS WANT INCREASE

Roanoke, Va., Nov. 4.—The general committee of the Locomotive Engineers on the Norfolk & Western have presented a higher wage scale and a new code of rules. Other organizations have gained higher wages, but the engineers waited until all the other adjustments had been made, but now ask that their wages be increased.

HOT MILLS CLOSED DOWN

Sharon, Pa., Nov. 4.—Twenty-three of the seventy hot mills of the Sharon and Newcastle Works of the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company have been closed down, and 14,000 men are thrown out of employment.

The Retail Clerks' Union in Wheeling, West Virginia, recently organized, has reduced the working hours of its members 3 per week.

NURSES EMPHATIC

Chicago, Nov. 4.--The nurses of Mercy Hospital have made it plain to the management of that institution that they will not assist in preparing baths for strike breakers of the Illinois Central Railroad, and will not treat them as they would other patients. The trouble between the nurses, who sympathize with the Illinois Central strikers, and the management of the hospital was brought to an issue when a strike breaker in the 27th street shop was taken to the hospital. At first the nurses demurred at doing anything for him at all, and when requested to prepare his bath issued an ultimatum that that was something they would not do. The management capitulated and the strike breaker was admitted bathless to ward A. The other patients in this ward objected to his being put in among them and demurred in such strong terms that the strike breaker was transferred to another ward.

TRAINMEN IN STRIKE MOOD

Galveston, Nov. 4.--The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, and the Order of Railroad Conductors on the Harriman lines in Texas have voted to go on strike with the shop men. Notice has been served on the railroad officials. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen and the Order of Railroad Telegraphers are now voting on the same proposition, and it is reported that all of these organizations will join with the shop men unless the demands are met by the Company. It is rumored that the Brotherhoods contemplate a federation similar to the shop crafts and are prepared to ask the Company to recognize the Trainmen's Federation in making new agreements to replace those which expire shortly. Should this combination be put in effect it would mean the complete unanimity of both shop and operating forces.

DENVER SITUATION CLARIFIED

Denver, Nov. 4.--The Amalgamated Carpenters have joined the Brotherhood Carpenters under the conditions offered by the Brotherhood. The agreement is that the original seven Amalgamated Carpenters will be given cards from the Carpenters' District Council. It is further agreed that the Amalgamated men who came here to take the places of the Brotherhood Carpenters, when the two organizations were contesting for jurisdiction, will be received into the Brotherhood with full benefits from the time they affiliate and will be given traveling cards when they desire, all being entitled to the privileges and benefits of the organization. This ends one of the most bitter contests in the history of this city.

FOR BOOKBINDERS' TRADE SCHOOL

Washington, Nov. 4.--At the Cedar Rapids' Convention of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders a resolution was adopted that a committee be appointed to inquire into the question of the establishment of a trade school to be owned and operated by the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, the committee to report to the next convention. In pursuance of this resolution a committee has been appointed to carry out what the resolution directed.